

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 07413 272112Z

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ACTION ITF-01

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGSS: SREF, CB, TH

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND: REQUEST TO EXTEND THE
PAROLE AUTHORITY

REF: A) STATE 02302 B) STATE 91731 C) STATE 93736 D) STATE 84161

E) PARIS 10488

SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS PAROLE AUTHORIZATION FOR CAMBODIANS
BE EXTENDED BEYOND THOSE 1100 KHMER WHOM THE USG TRANSPORTED TO
THAILAND FROM CAMBODIA UNDER OPERATIN "EAGLE PULL." THERE ARE
ABOUT ANOTHER 1400 KHMER REFUGEES IN THAILAND WHOSE POSITION
IN CAMBODIA AND CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE USG MAKE IT
IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA AT THIS TIME OR IN
THE NEAR FUTURE. SOME OF THESE CAME OUT OF CAMBODIA IN EFFORTS
ENCOURAGED BY THE USG. END SUMMARY

1. THE RTG INFORMS US THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 6000 KHMER REFUGEES
IN THAILAND. THIS FIGURE INCLUDES THE APPROXIMATE 1100 KHMER
WHICH THE USG TRANSPORTED FROM THAILAND. AMONG THE REMAINING
NUMBER THERE ARE PROBABLY ANOTHER (INCLUDING FAMILY MEMBERS
WHO OCCUPIED POSITONS

IN THE GKR OR WERE SO CLOSELY ALLIED WITH THE USG THAT IT
IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA IN THE NEAR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 07413 272112Z

FUTURE. THE NUMBER OF 1400 IS, HOWEVER, ONLY OUR BEST

ESTIMATE AT THIS POINT IN TIME. IT IS BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE RTG, OUR OBSERVATION OF KHMER REFUGEE CAMPS ESTABLISHED IN THE FRONTIER AREAS BY THE RTG, AND ON THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME VOLUNTARILY TO THE EMBASSY TO ASK FOR ASYLUM IN OR IMMIGRATION TO THE US.

2. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT PAROLE AUTHORIZATION GRANTED FOR CAMBODIANS TRANSPORTED TO THAILAND BY THE USG UNDER OPERATION "EAGLE PULL" (REFS A & B) BE EXTENDED TO THESE APPROXIMATE 1400 MORE PERSONS. THE GROUPS AND THEIR APPROXIMATE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. KHMER MILITARY AND DEPENDENTS WHO CAME TO THAILAND ON MAP FUNDED KAF AIRCRAFT: AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF U.S. EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND CONCOMMITANT WITH THE FALL OF PHNOM PENH, SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF KHMER AIR FORCE, IN A PLAN ENCOURAGED PREVIOUSLY BY U.S. OFFICIALS, ESCAPED CAMBODIA ON MAP FUNDED AIRCRAFT. THIS EFFORT PREVENTED EQUIPMENT FROM FAILING TO THE OTHER SIDE, AND WAS CONDUCTED BY MEN WHO FOUGHT RIGHT UP TO THE LAST RATHER THAN DEPARTING EARLIER AS WAS WITHIN THEIR POWER. WE BELIEVE THAT THESE MEN AND THEIR DEPENDENTS ESPECIALLY MERIT PAROLE BECAUSE OF PRIOR U.S. CONSULTATION WITH THEM ON THIS PLAN. THE GROUP WOULD NUMBER PERHAPS AS HIGH AS 375.

B. KHMER WHO ESCAPED TO THAILAND ON MAP FUNDED MNK NAVAL VESSELS: IN ADDITION TO THOSE KHMER MILITARY WHO REACHED THAILAND ON KAF AIRCRAFT, A NUMBER OF KHMER HAVE ARRIVED IN THAILAND ON POSSIBLY MAP FUNDED VESSELS. THERE WAS IMPLIED US OFFICIAL ENCOURAGEMENT, AND AGAIN MILITARY EQUIPMENT POSSIBLY UNDER US REVERSIONARY TITLE WAS DENIED TO THE KC. THERE ARE 625 WHO ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE VIA MALAYSIA AND ANOTHER 100 WHO GOT TO TRAT PROVINCE ON MAP FUNDED BOATS. THIS MAKES A TOTAL OF 725. THERE ARE REPORTS OF POSSIBLY TWO OTHER BOATS THAT LEFT CAMBODIA FOR THAILAND, WHICH COULD RAISE THIS FIGURE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT MANY PEOPLE ABOARD THESE BOATS MIGHT NOT FALL CLEARLY INTO A PERMANENT REFUGEE STATUS, AND ESTIMATE THAT PERHAPS NOT MORE THAN 250 WOULD MERIT PAROLE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 07413 272112Z

C. KHMER VIP'S AND CIVIL SERVANTS: A NUMBER OF KHMER VIP'S AND LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS REACHED THAILAND BY MEANS OTHER THAN USG TRANSPORT OR KHMER MILITARY TRANSPORT. AGAIN, THESE OFFICIALS COULD NOT RETURN TO CAMBODIA WITHOUT GRAVE RISK OF PERSECUTION. AN EXAMPLE IS IN TAM. WE CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF THIS GROUP TO ABOUT 200 INCLUDING DEPENDENTS.

D. KHMER MILITARY TRAINING IN THAILAND: THERE ARE 431

KHMER MILITARY WHO ARE IN MAP FUNDED TRAINING IN THAILAND, AND THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 50 DEPENDENTS OF THESE STUDENTS NOW LOCATED IN THAILAND. (FYI THERE ARE 318 STUDENTS PLUS DEPENDENTS NOW IN THE U.S.) WE BELIEVE THAT THESE 481 KHMER IN THAILAND SHOULD ALSO BE GRANTED PAROLES.

E. KHMER DIPLOMATS: THERE ARE ALSO SOME 100 KHMER DIPLOMATS, ATTACHES AND EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WHO ARE IN BANGKOK, MANY OF WHOM HAVE ALREADY REQUESTED US ASYLUM.

3.COMMENT AND PRIORITIES: WE BELIEVE THAT IN CONSIDERING THE NUMBER OF KHMER PAROLEES TO THE US FROM THAILAND. WASHINGTON SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE SPECIAL FACTORS PRESENT IN THE THAI CASE. THE RTG HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE WITH THE USG ON THE EVACUATION OF ITS PEOPLE FROM PHNOM PENH, BUT HAS A SPECIAL RELUCTANCE TO PERMITTING NUMBER OF KHMER REFUGEES TO REMAIN IN THAILAND. THIS IMPOSES SHORT TIME LIMITS ON US. WE CANNOT RULE OUT THAT THE RTG COULD DETERMINE TO RETURN KHMER TO AN UNCERTAIN FATE IN CAMBODIA.

4. THAILAND HAS LARGE NUMBERS OF KHMER REFUGEES BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY NEIGHBORING COUNTRY WITH A LAND BORDER TO WHICH REFUGEES CAN ESCAPE. EVEN IF WE ARE ABLE TO PAROLE 2500 INTO THE US, THE THAI WILL STILL HAVE 3000-4000 WITH WHICH TO CONTEND.

5. FINALLY, SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL 1400 ARE PERSONS WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN ELIGIBLE TO HAVE BEEN LIFTED OUT IN "EAGLE PULL" HAD THEY BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER THEMSELVES.

6. THE 1400 PERSONS DISCUSSED ABOVE PLUS THE 1100 KHMER WHOM WE BROUGHT OUT OF CAMBODIA TO THAILAND TOTALS 2500. AFTER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BANGKO 07413 272112Z

TAKING THE CASE UNDER CONSIDERATION, SHOULD 1400 ADDITIONAL KHMER PAROLEES POSE A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR WASHINGTON, WE WOULD GIVE HIGHER PRIORITY TO THE PAROLE OF HIGH LEVEL GKR PERSONNEL (BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY) AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, AND TO KHMER AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS WHO BROUGHT OUT MAP FUNDED AIRCRAFT THAN TO OTHER CATEGORIES. WE HOPE NEVERTHELESS, THAT AUTHORIZATION FOR 1400 MORE PAROLEES WILL BE GRANTED.
MASTERS

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